

This book by C.W. Michael is written from a place of informed thought and hard experience and deserves wide exposure. It is not only ‘a practical guide to surviving arrest in Canada’ but is an excellent text for courses in criminal justice as well as a resource for anyone wanting a meaningful understanding of Canada’s system of arrest, trial and punishment.

This book is accessible and fun to read. It is entertaining and illuminating and it is a read that goes by ‘in a blink.’ I was left wondering why such a fine writer would want to remain anonymous and use a pseudonym. I felt excited, illuminated, and aroused by the images and I couldn’t put the book down. Recommended.

REFERENCES

Michael, C.W. (2012). *The Criminal’s Handbook: A Practical Guide to Surviving Arrest in Canada*. London, ONT: Insomniac Press.



The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book

Hill, Gord.

Foreword by Allan Antliff;

Introduction by Dave Cunningham

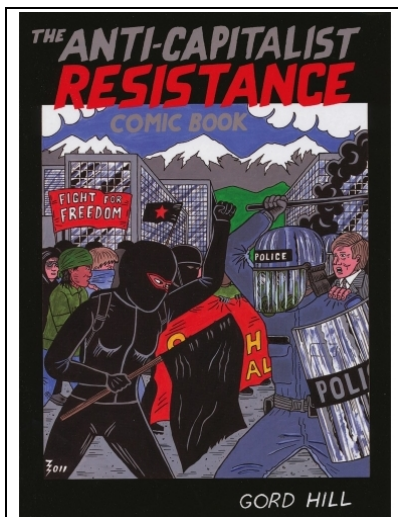
(Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2012. 96 pages.)

Reviewed by—Mike Larsen,

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, June 2013.

Gord Hill’s *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* presents a narrative account of the history of anti-capitalist mobilization from the standpoint of participants involved in direct action. Hill stops short of explicitly identifying himself as one of the central characters, but there is an autobiographical tone to the work: most of the events depicted in *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* are seen from the perspective of militant members of Indigenous, anarchist, and anti-capitalist social movements who hail from occupied Coast Salish territory.

The book (written and illustrated by Hill) is composed of a collection of comics of varying lengths, each documenting a particular convergence or action. It is organized in chronological order, with a focus on events following the rise of the anti-globalization movement during the 1990s. With a few exceptions (notably the J18 '99 Carnival Against Capital and the Battle in Seattle), the events chronicled in *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance*



Resistance Comic Book take place in Canada. The 2001 Quebec City Summit of the Americas, 2010 Vancouver Anti-Olympic Campaign, and 2010 Toronto G20 Summit are profiled at length. Readers get a glimpse at some of the conversations between activists that take place in the lead-up to actions (especially prior to the 2010 Olympics), but the majority of the book focuses on moments of public confrontation between members of social movements and authorities—occupations, marches, and running street battles.

The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book opens with a short, helpful prologue on the historical linkages between capitalism and colonialism. The prologue invites readers to situate the book's account of late modern anti-capitalist struggles in a broader socio-historical context, and it introduces one of Hill's main themes, as noted in the foreword by author Allan Antliff:

Addressing what he is fighting for, Gord begins his narrative with tribal ways of life prior to the imposition of state power, and rightly so. Indigenous affinities with anarchism reside not only in a shared recognition that state power and exploitation are flip sides of the same coin: decentralizing power so as to renew societal ways of life attuned to nature in all its diversity is the heart of the matter for Indigenous peoples and anarchists alike. (9)

Hill regards Indigenous anti-colonial struggles and anti-capitalist resistance as being naturally and inextricably entwined, and

historically rooted in the central role that the European colonization of the Americas played in the expansion of capital and empire. This is a theme that is explored at length in Hill's previous work, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (2010). The two books are complimentary, and combined they offer a provocative challenge to the dominant historical narratives of settlement and globalization.

Another key theme addressed in *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* is the heterogeneous nature of the anti-globalization movement, exemplified in the fault lines that exist between actors and groups with different perspectives on the merits of diversity of tactics, street theatre, collaboration with authorities in the organization of events, and the broader reform vs. revolution debate. Hill is an outspoken proponent of both peaceful protest and militant action, but an opponent of dogmatic pacifism and reformism. In *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book*, his criticism of liberal left perspectives often takes the form of satire. In one scene, during the Battle in Seattle, militants participating in a Black Bloc are confronted by a self-proclaimed 'legitimate protester' who opposes their engagement in property destruction. Having failed to convince the militants to desist in window-smashing, the protester attempts to physically restrain them, prompting an observer to remark "Pacifists. Some of 'em are violently opposed to property destruction. No respect for diversity" (34). Towards the end of the book Hill criticizes the bureaucratic nature of the Occupy organizing model through a depiction of an occupier addressing a group and saying "I propose we make a new committee to discuss the issue and, failing to then reach a decision, make a sub-committee to further debate the issue and then bring it to the general assembly ..." (94). Both of these scenes provide fruitful launching points for discussion and debate.

Hill's black-and-white graphic art is characterful and uncluttered. The illustrated panels mesh well with the textual narrative, emphasizing action, conflict, and the physicality of the struggles depicted. Throughout the book, Hill incorporates panels that reproduce iconic photographs of events, including the image of Tommie Smith and John Carlos giving the Black Power salute during their medal ceremony at the 1968 Olympic Games, the assault on the mesh fence and enthusiastic use of

pepper spray by police at the 1997 APEC summit, and the image of a masked and helmeted cop stomping on the back of a seated protester during the 2010 G20.

These panels serve as welcome intersections between *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* and other representations of events. I recently used an excerpt from Hill's account of the events surrounding the Toronto 2010 G20 as a reading in a class on violence in the context of 'summit policing', and invited my students to seek out some of the photographs and videos that are reflected in the comic. Each time a panel was 'matched' to another image in this way a fruitful discussion ensued. We explored the context surrounding the image, discussed the authenticity of the representation, and talked about other images that could serve as inspiration for new panels.

By way of constructive criticism (and perhaps a suggestion for future projects), there is room in *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* for additional coverage of some key issues. The impact of the state reaction to the events of 11 September 2001 on both policing and anti-capitalist organizing, for instance, deserves more than the single page it gets, for example. Some additional discussion of the implications of the surveillance and infiltration of social movements by police and security agencies would also be beneficial. For the most part, 'the authorities' depicted in *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* are clearly recognizable as such, as most are wearing militaristic uniforms and riot gear. Hill's style is highly effective at emphasizing the distinctions between visibly-identifiable factions (black-clad cops, participants in Black Bloc actions, and non-militant protesters are easy to pick out), and it would be interesting to see him address the more ambiguous shapes that the politics of class conflict can and does take.

If Hill's objective with *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* is to provide a provocative, radical, view-from-the-streets introduction to the recent history and broader context associated with anti-capitalist resistance, he has definitely succeeded. This is not—and is not intended to be—a comprehensive overview or in-depth analysis. As Hill (2010: 6) has previously noted, "[t]he strength of the comic book is that it uses minimal text with graphic art to tell the story. This format is useful in reaching children, youth, and adults who have a hard

time reading books or lengthy articles". Beyond these audiences, *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* will be of interest to activists and educators interested in supplementing and expanding traditional literacies through the incorporation of graphic narrative.

REFERENCES

Hill, Gord (2010). *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Hill, Gord (2012). *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.



State Power and Democracy: Before and During the Presidency of George W. Bush

Kolin, Andrew.

(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 262 pages.)

Reviewed by—G.G. Preparata,
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In roughly 200 pages, A. Kolin's *State Power and Democracy* is designed to offer a supple chronological account of the process that has—gradually but steadily—transformed America's early colonial commonwealth into a full-blown technocratic and authoritarian (and, one might add, nightmarish) system.

The book's simple thesis is reiterated, chapter after chapter, by showing how, from the outset, America was conceived as an elitist structure whose constitutional concern was, de facto, to render the crucial governing mechanisms of the newly-founded, and vibrant, "democracy" (in name only), as stringently undemocratic as possible. In other words, the thesis seems to imply that the United States has always been a (nasty) monarchy in disguise, and that the deceit has become irremediably patent with the advent and post-9/11 politics and policies of George